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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Identical letters dated 31 December 2008 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly

I would like to inform you that the Permanent Mission of Israel to the United Nations distributed as holiday gifts to staff of the United Nations Secretariat wine made from grapes harvested, and bottles made, in the occupied Syrian Golan.

Upon instructions from my Government, I strongly condemn this provocative and irresponsible behaviour by the Permanent Mission of Israel. The action demonstrates contempt for international legitimacy at United Nations Headquarters. The winery where the wine bottles were produced was built by the Israelis in the occupied Syrian Golan in violation of both Security Council resolutions 465 (1980) and 497 (1981). In these resolutions, the Security Council called upon the Israeli occupying Power to take measures for the impartial protection of private and public land, property, and water resources. The resolutions further determine that all measures taken by Israel, the occupying Power, to change the physical character, demographic composition, institutional structures or status of the occupied Arab territories therefore have no legal validity.

Furthermore, this action is in clear violation of General Assembly resolution 63/201 entitled, "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources".

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In conformity with international law and United Nations resolutions, the Syrian Arab Republic requests the international community to assume its responsibilities in preventing Israel from continuing its violations, and to discontinue any behaviour that exploits, damages, causes loss or depletion of or endangers the natural resources in the occupied Syrian Golan.

I would appreciate it if you would request all United Nations staff to refrain from accepting these Israeli gifts produced illegally in occupied Syrian territory in violation of the aforementioned Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. In this regard, I would also kindly ask you to draw the attention of Member States to the gravity and seriousness of Israeli actions.

I would appreciate it if you would immediately circulate the present letter to all Member States as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda items 15, 30 and 38.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative